Both sides reviewed their economic and commercial cooperation and identified fields such as Biotechnology, Information Technology, hydrocarbons, Railways, Education and Agriculture where existing complementarities could be exploited for mutual benefit. They agreed to excourage the private and public sectors to expand the scope of mutual trade and investments.

Primie Minister of India also announced a Credit Line of US$ 25 million (US Dollar twenty five million) for development of bilateral trade. The announcement of credit line by India for the purpose of boosting bilateral trade was welcomed by Syria. Both sides agreed to double the bilateral trade by 2005 and decided to identify priority areas for this purpose.

Both the governments noted with satisfaction the progress achieved in bilateral cooperation in biotechnology sector. The establishment of Syrian National Biotechology Centre at the University of Damascus with Indian assistance will further enhance their peaceful cooperation in this vital field. Both sides will undertake joint projects for mutual benefit. Indian Prime Minister announced a special grant of US$ 1 million to assit implemented of the agreed programme of cooperation and make the Centre an institute of excellence.

(d) No.

(e) Does not arise.

Ag eement with UAE

†1774. SHRI KHAN GHUFRAN ZAHIDI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the ecnomic, political and commercial agreements made between India the UAE during the State visit of President of India to that country;

(b) whether any agreement on matters of extradition treaty and information technology has also been signed between the two countries; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINDO KHANNA): (a) No Agreements were signed during the State visit of Rashtrapatiji to UAE.

(b) and (c) A bilateral Extradition Treaty, a Mutual Legal Assitance Treaty in Criminal Matters and Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty on Civil Matters signed on October 25, 1999, came into froce on May 29, 2000 upon the exchange the Instruments of Ratification. No specific bilateral agreement on Information Technology has been sigend.

Open Sky Offer to Asean

1775. DR. VIJAY MALLYA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the "open sky" offer made to the ASEAN following the agreement of CEC recently signed by the Prime Minister with ASEAN at Bali, Indonesia;

(b) what are the benefits likely to accrue to India;

(c) whether any action is being contemplated to enter into similar agreement with SAARC countries; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) Designated Airlines of ASEAN countries have been offered daily flights to the four metropolitan cities of India, namely Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata and unlimited flights to 18 other designated tourist destinations in India.

(b) Increased air connectivity is conducive in promoting trade, tourism and people-to-people contacts.

(c) and (d) No similiar agreement for SAARC countries is under consideration at present. However, India has offered daily air services to the Designated Airlines of Sri Lanka between Colombo and Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Kolkata. Unlimited access is also available to the Designated Airlines of Sri Lanka to and from the 18 tourist destinations in India. Commercial agreements between the Designated Airlines of the two countries for asymmetrical operations have